

**SUMMARY OF NORTH GEORGIA-ATLANTA
REGIONAL TRUCK LANE USER TASK FORCE MEETING**

**GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study – May 22, 2007
KSU Center – Kennesaw, Georgia**

The second North Georgia Truck Lane Users Task Force Meeting for the GDOT Truck Lane Needs Identification Study was held at the KSU Center in Kennesaw, GA on May 22, 2007 beginning at approximately 1:05 PM. Matthew Fowler, GDOT Planning, welcomed the group. He turned the floor over to Andrew Smith, Consultant Project Manager for HNTB. The following individuals attended the meeting:

Name	Company	Phone	E-Mail
Greg Herbig	UPS Freight	770-682-2124	gherbig@upsfreight.com
Ken Meservy	Nestle	770-294-0646	
Don Helms	Publix	770-995-0073	Don.helms@publix.com
Bob Walmsley	Publix	863-499-5495?	Bob.walmsley@publix.com
Robert Bland	Publix	404-925-1661	Robert.bland@publix.com
Matthew Fowler	GDOT	--	matthew.fowler@dot.state.ga.us
Michelle Caldwell	GDOT	--	michelle.caldwell@dot.state.ga.us
Tom McQueen	GDOT	--	tom.mcqueen@dot.state.ga.us
Andrew Smith	HNTB	404-946-5700	asmith@hntb.com
Claudia Bilotto	HNTB	404-946-5700	cbilotto@hntb.com
Kelly Burnes	HNTB	404-946-5700	kburnes@hntb.com
Dike Ahanotu	Cambridge Systematics	--	dahanotu@camsys.com

Study Update

Mr. Smith discussed the agenda and gave an overview of today's meeting. He said that the study is at the halfway point and that the most promising segments for truck only lanes on Georgia's highways have been identified. He then explained that a video with 3-D animation was created to help people visualize the truck only lanes concept. The video was then played.

After the video, Mr. Smith continued with the PowerPoint presentation. He touched on the Guiding Principles of the study. At this point, Dike Ahanotu was then introduced to talk about the data collection.

Mr. Ahanotu began by stating the types of data that was used: GDOT traffic counts, the crash/accident database, O/D surveys, and a national database, the TRANSEARCH database. He said that the amount of truck traffic passing through the state accounts for one third of total trips. Georgia's trading partners are the neighboring states and the map shown indicated the truck travel between states.

Mr. Ahanotu then discussed the results of the crash analysis; that is, how do truck accidents compare to auto accidents. The data indicated that trucks have roughly the same amount of crashes as autos, though the more severe accidents, fatal accidents, involve trucks.

A parking analysis was also conducted and Mr. Ahanotu explained that trucks sometimes have no choice but to park on ramps and shoulders. If truckers do not take their mandatory rest breaks, this too can be a safety hazard to the motoring public.

Mr. Ahanotu said truck volume is going to be increasing and that the most intensive activity right now is south of Atlanta. However, in 2035, basically the entire interstate system will have intensive truck activity.

At this point, Mr. Ahanotu turned the floor back over to Mr. Smith, who then discussed the evaluation framework.

Mr. Smith said as we start to piece together the different factors that help determine if truck lanes are warranted, you start to see that the conditions are ripe for investment. He discussed the three network scenarios that showed an investment in truck lanes leads to more efficient travel and that this has a positive impact on congestion. Moving from a LOS E to A LOS D is a significant difference. (LOS stands for Level of Service.)

Mr. Smith then identified the 3 distinct highway segments that emerged as recommendations for truck only lanes: I-75, Tennessee state line to Macon; the radial freeways of I-85 and I-20; and the Chatham County-Savannah area.

Mr. Smith wrapped up the presentation portion of the meeting by discussing the next steps of the study. He said we will look at where we should be providing access, investigating the engineering work that needs to be done – are truck only lanes possible to construct?, and determining the cost/benefit. The study is scheduled to be completed in October of this year.

At this point, Mr. Smith opened the floor for questions.

Questions

Don Helms asked if HOV's would have to cross the truck only lanes. Or would trucks have to cross the HOV lanes? Mr. Smith replied that HOV and truck only interchanges would be built to accommodate this; however, this is a big challenge and something we are working through right now.

Mr. Helms asked if there is enough room to build this truck infrastructure. He stated that before the Olympics, he attended a GMTA meeting where a statement was made that "what you see is what you get, there is no more room."

Mr. Smith replied that he thinks there is still room. Mr. Fowler added that it will be decided on a case by case basis, depending on the congestion level in different areas. Mr. Smith agreed.

Ken Meservy asked what the legislative process for implementing truck only lanes is. Robert Bland stated that GMTA sent out a notice for support. At this point, Mr. Smith jumped in to offer a clarification that they were discussing the I-75/I-575 project.

Bob Walmsley asked how the lanes could be mandatory if we keep saying we don't know how many people will use them. Mr. Smith replied that right now all the truck lanes are free, all are voluntary. Right now, we're just trying to figure out if truck lanes have merit. Once we figure that out, we'll figure out the tolling and other policy related aspects.

Mr. Walmsley thought that if 36% of thru truck traffic is through traffic, that they would use the TOL system. Mr. Smith replied yes, that he was exactly right.

Mr. Helms said he took part in ARC's freight planning and that it sounds as if the two studies are running parallel with each other. He went on to say that at the last meeting, the percent of truck flows looked similar. If you eliminate 36% of the trucks going through, it seems that you would

relieve congestion in the general purpose lanes. He offered that perhaps we could build new infrastructure.

Mr. Smith stated that investing in green field building could be more or less expensive. Mr. Fowler said that by putting truck lanes in the same corridor, we're getting more bang for the buck.

Mr. Smith wanted to make a note that our study is running parallel with ARC's study. They did O/D surveys inside the metro Atlanta area and that we did O/D surveys outside the metro Atlanta area and then shared the data. He was glad the numbers were similar. He said he did not know if ARC's study was looking at truck only lanes.

Mr. Helms stated that 14% of truck trips for his company were local and he was trying to visualize how his trucks would access the truck only lanes, questioning if his trucks would actually use the lanes?

Mr. Smith asked how much you think your trucks would use the lanes.

Mr. Helms replied they would use them to avoid bottlenecks, like everybody else.

Mr. Smith asked the group how much time you need to save to use the truck lane. 5 minutes? More than an hour? Is 10 minutes to a truck driver not enough?

Mr. Helms replied it's hours of service, that drivers are experiencing 6 hours of delay due to rush hour. I am losing 30 minutes per trip per truck. It's impacting the service to my customers because timeliness is critical. We make 2000 trips per week and we are just one company.

Mr. Bland said we can only access Hwy 316; we can't get off till I-285. Mr. Walmsley added of those 2000 trips, 500 of them cross Atlanta.

Mr. Smith said that one of our biggest challenges is access. We want to maximize our market when we think of access. It's a balancing act as to what usage we're going to get out of it.

Mr. Walmsley said that if we save 15 minutes or more, over a year, that would be beneficial when you take into account equipment, wages, and fuel.

Mr. Helms said the threshold is usually set at 30 minutes.

Mr. Smith asked if Publix provides routes to its drivers.

Mr. Helms responded that they use a routing system that picks the most efficient route. Mr. Ahanotu asked if the routing system accounted for congestion. Mr. Walmsley said the future should account for congestion.

Tom McQueen asked what they considered a trip to be.

Mr. Helms answered that one trip is out and back. They try to estimate when the driver will be back to make another trip.

Claudia Bilotto asked if long haul trips come to their facility and then Publix distributes the goods by making smaller trips.

Mr. Helms stated that was correct.

Mr. Bland said we can't wait till 2035.

Mr. Helms said he heard at the ARC meeting that bottlenecks were the biggest frustration. He thought that was the silliest answer but then realized it was true.

Mr. Smith said that freight gets caught up in bottlenecks when you have 4 interstates coming together.

Mr. Meservy said we need to move congestion out of the area because it's going to get worse since distribution centers cannot locate in Florida due to hurricanes.

Mr. Walmsley asked if we had the money to do it, what would the timeline be.

Mr. Smith replied that if we had all of the funding, it would probably take 10 years to get a truck only lane on the ground. He added that the I-75-I-575 study is looking to begin construction in 2009.

Mr. Helms worried about tackling one segment at a time because that only moves other places to gridlock a little quicker. We need to look at the whole thing holistically.

Mr. Fowler emphasized that this is the intent of the statewide truck lanes study. We are looking at the long haul of truck movements.

Mr. Smith added that it is a system plan, we are developing a system, that it will be staged by the segments that are ranked 1st, 2nd, etc. that would most benefit from a truck only lane.

With that, the meeting ended at approximately 2:30 PM.